



The Toggle Iron

Conference Celebrates Douglass and Melville



Frederick Douglass and Herman Melville: A Sesquicentennial Celebration was held in and around New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park.

In June, New Bedford was the host city for the Melville Society's Fifth Annual International Conference, *Frederick Douglass and Herman Melville: A Sesquicentennial Celebration*. The conference, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the publication of both Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom* and Melville's *Benito Cereno*, drew hundreds of participants and their guests to New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park over a four day period. In addition to a slate of concurrent sessions dealing with topics such as race and ethnicity, slavery and freedom and the context of 19th century New Bedford, participants were treated to a menu of evening performances, lectures, and exhibitions. Conference attendees also had the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of the two men during tours led by park staff and members of the New Bedford Historical Society. The tours highlighted sites associated with both Douglass and Melville and their time in New Bedford.

The conference brought to New Bedford much deserved recognition for the stories which took place here as well as highlighting the resources which can tell those stories today.

From the Superintendent

This summer, New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park joined with others to remember two influential Americans: Frederick Douglass and Herman Melville, who simultaneously spent time in New Bedford in the 1830s.

Today, thanks to the National Park Service, its partners, and the efforts of individuals and organizations over the last few decades, visitors can walk down the city's cobblestone streets and view many of the sights that Melville and Douglass may have seen. Who knows what influences the city and its whaling industry had on the formation of Melville's and Douglass's views on race, freedom, and nationhood.

We hope that New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, through its partners, continues to stimulate dialogue and thought through its many new exhibits, programs, and special events offered this summer. Join us in celebrating New Bedford's whaling legacy.

Celeste Bernardo

Many of the events held in addition to conference sessions were open to the public and several exhibits set up for the conference have remained up throughout the summer. During a free public event, Charles Pace, nationally known for his portrayal of Frederick Douglass, masterfully recreated the life and times of the 19th century abolitionist, author, and statesman for a large audience of conference participants and members of the local community, including many school children. New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park co-sponsored *Frederick Douglass and Herman Melville: Our Bondage and Our Freedom*, an exhibit at the New Bedford Whaling Museum that examines both men through the lens of 19th century New Bedford. The New Bedford Free Public Library has on display artifacts from their collection related to the two men and the New Bedford Art Museum opened an exhibit that included the works of three contemporary artists and their interpretations of *Moby-Dick*.

During the conference, the New Bedford Historical Society opened up the Nathan and Polly Johnson House, first free home of Frederick Douglass and a National Historic Landmark, to serve as an official US Post Office cancellation station. The Director of New Bedford's office of Marketing and Tourism, Arthur Motta, designed a special cache in recognition of the conference. Another highlight of the conference was a modern adaptation of Melville's *Benito Cereno* presented, in part, by

(Continued on Page 2)

Douglass and Melville Conference

Continued from Page 1

author and Melville biographer, Laurie Robertson-Lorant and Culture Park, a New Bedford-based theater company.

Lee Heald, Vice President of Programs and Education for the New Bedford Whaling Museum, one of the conference sponsors, commented on the enduring impact of the conference, "By any measure, the conference was a great success. It brought to New Bedford much deserved recognition for the

stories which took place here as well as highlighting the resources which can tell those stories today. Community members and scholars had the chance to meet, interact and share their perspectives of the cultural legacies of both men. The new scholarship developed and fresh interpretative connections between Douglass and Melville, two major figures of American literature, will continue to generate interest in this generation of students."

In addition to the park, the New Bedford Whaling Museum and the Melville Society, several local organizations collaborated in the planning and implementation of the conference. They include the City of New Bedford, the New Bedford Historical Society, the Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum, the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, the New Bedford Art Museum, and Artworks!



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park was established in 1996 to help preserve and interpret America's nineteenth century whaling history. The park encompasses a 13-block National Historic Landmark District and addresses the history of the whaling industry and its influence on the economic, social, and environmental history of the United States.

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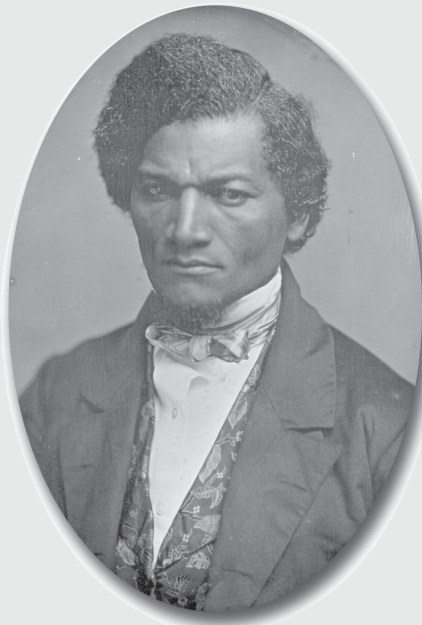
Park Visitor Center
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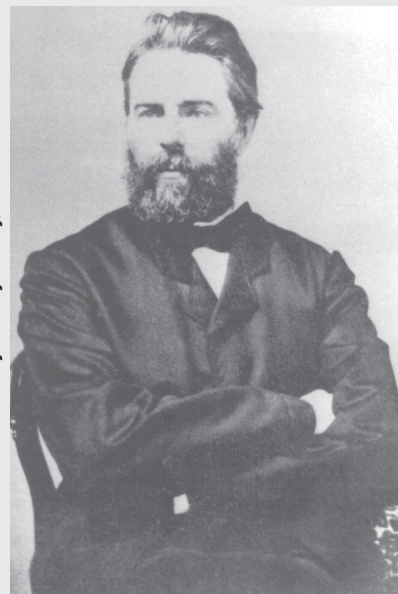
Temple Toggle-Iron: The most successful harpoon ever made. Invented by Lewis Temple, an African American whalecraft-maker of New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1848, and at first called "porpoise iron" and "Temple's gig." It became the universal whale iron, and has never been improved upon. (From Clifford W. Ashley's, **The Yankee Whaler**)



Courtesy of Chicago Institute of Art.

In 1838 a young man named Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey escaped slavery by boarding a train headed to Philadelphia from Baltimore. He used another sailor's protection papers and arrived safely in Philadelphia. After going to New York where he married his wife Anna and took a steamship to Newport, Rhode Island where he met two quakers from New Bedford. The two men directed him into a stagecoach headed for New Bedford. He was led to the home of Nathan and Mary Johnson on Seventh Street. The Johnsons took him and his new wife into their home, gave them food and shelter, and helped them learn to secure those benefits for themselves. At the Johnson home, he was also given the name he would carry for the rest of his life, Frederick Douglass.

Photo of Herman Melville by Rodney Dewey, 1861



In January 1841, a 21 year old Herman Melville shipped out on the whaler *Acushnet*, from the neighboring port of Fairhaven across the harbor from New Bedford, in search of adventure and fortune. It was this whaling voyage, which provided much of the context for the fictional voyage of the *Pequod* in *Moby-Dick*. During the week leading up to his departure, Melville wandered the streets of New Bedford taking in the sights of the bustling seaport city—many of which are mentioned in the opening chapters of *Moby-Dick*. Ironically, it wasn't until after Melville's death in 1891 that his work became known and appreciated. Every year on January 3rd, to mark the anniversary of the *Acushnet's* departure, a 25 hour marathon reading of *Moby-Dick* is held at the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

Sizzling Summer Season Attracts Thousands

As the summer season winds down at the park and we make the transition to fall we would like to take the opportunity to reflect on all of the activities, events and achievements that made the summer of 2005 special.

Events like Summerfest and AHA! nights drew thousands of visitors to the park to experience the wealth of maritime, ethnic, and artisan culture in New Bedford. The park's concert and craft series, a summertime tradition in New Bedford, enlivened the park with musicians, crafters, and storytellers on Thursdays and Saturdays all summer long. Volunteer and Ranger-led tours introduced visitors to New Bedford's role as the leading whaling port in America's 19th century whaling industry and related park themes. Junior Rangers explored the cobblestone streets of the park and the waterfront to earn junior ranger badges and visitors came from all over the globe to experience the only national park site dedicated to preserve and interpret the story of America's 19th century whaling.

We hope you will enjoy some of our favorite photos from the summer of 2005 and invite you to take a voyage to New Bedford year round to "Experience Your America."





Volunteer Spotlight



Name: Dayna Meehan

Age: 21

City/Town you live in: New Bedford

Family: Mom, Dad, 4 siblings, 10 cats

Occupation: Supervisor at Campus Center Information Desk and student at UMass Dartmouth

Special Interests/Hobbies: Travel, reading, basketball, school

How long have you been a volunteer at the visitor center?
I have been a volunteer for 2 months.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering at the visitor center?
I enjoy the smiling faces of those who wander far to view New Bedford's local history.

Why did you decide to become a volunteer? I was doing a thesis project with the Whaling Museum. As part of that project I interviewed the Chief of Visitor Services at the park and became interested in being a volunteer as a way to help the community.

What is the most interesting thing that you've done in your life? Mountain climbing, it is a very interesting and challenging physical activity.

What is the one thing that you'd like to do or try? There is not just one thing I'd like to do or try, because everything should be experienced once during a lifetime.

If you grew up in this area, what is one of your fondest memories? My fondest memories of New Bedford were the days at Buttonwood Park, walking through the bike paths, and throwing bread at the ducks.

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Nine Complete Park's Volunteer Training

Under a beautiful late June sky, park staff and volunteers gathered to celebrate the graduation of nine new volunteers from the spring volunteer training program. This annual volunteer appreciation event, a potluck supper, is one that both staff and volunteers look forward to. "This event, held outside in the visitor center garden, is a nice informal way to welcome the new volunteers and summer staff into the family," comments Chief of Visitor Services, Jennifer Gonsalves. "It gives all of us an opportunity to sit back, put up our feet and enjoy each other's company before the company, our summer visitors, arrives."

The new additions to the volunteer program come from diverse backgrounds and bring with them a wide variety of skills. All have expressed a desire to learn more about the National Park Service and to make meaningful contributions to the community through their work at New Bedford Whaling NHP. We welcome John Szymanski, Carol

Walsh, Eleanor Cotter, Diane Kieltyka, Elizabeth True, Gretchen Pohl, Carolyn Avery, Dayna Meehan, and Carol Strupczewski.



Volunteer Carol Walsh receives her graduation certificate from Chief of Visitor Services Jennifer Gonsalves as Deputy Superintendent Tom Ross looks on.

Park Crew List



Whaleships leaving New Bedford were required to register crew members on a whaling voyage. The "crew" at New Bedford Whaling National Historical park would like to welcome Kelly De Melo as the newest member on our crew list.

Name: Kelly De Melo

Job Title: Park Ranger - Visitor Use Assistant

Town you live in: Dartmouth, MA

Hometown: Dartmouth, MA

College: UMass Dartmouth

Major: Biology

Interests/Hobbies: Movies, volleyball, animals, traveling, photography, reading.

Pets: Boa Constrictor, cat, dog, tarantula, rabbit, and a hermit crab.

Duties Performed at Park: Kelly assists with the daily manangement of the park visitor center. She serves as front line staff contact for visitors, introduces the park's orientation film, facilitates and supervises special events highlighting the heritage and culture of the region including AHA!, Thursday evening programs, and Saturday craft and concert series. In addition, Kelly develops and conducts interpretive talks and tours about park themes and assists with special projects.

All mailing services for the Toggle Iron are provided courtesy of:
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New Bedford, MA



Where in the World is Tom Ross?

From Independence Hall to the nation's Capitol to the Mid-west, NEBE's Deputy Superintendent has been making his mark this year! In July 2004, Ross was selected for the USDA Graduate School's Executive Leadership Program (ELP) Class of 2005. The intensive year-long program has entailed coursework, readings, executive interviews, and developmental work assignments that have traveled him across the eastern USA.

During his training, Ross has had an opportunity to "shadow" Mary Bomar,



Tom Ross at his desk in Blackstone River Valley NHC

Superintendent of Independence National Park (now Northeast Regional Director), interview former Regional Director Marie Rust, as well as Deputy Director Donald Murphy. While on assignment in Washington D.C., he worked in the National Partnership Office, assisting this office in national policy making activities and observing high-level executive meetings with National Park Service Director Fran Mainella.

Ross also traveled to Cuyahoga Valley National Park where he spent 60 days working in the Science and Resource Management Division. He worked on a major research and science project studying the effects of community growth on the park and developing recommendations for the Park to work with communities. He also assisted in the development of a \$200,000 watershed planning partnership grant and gained valuable experience in natural resource management. Ross participated in natural resource management activities that took him into the field to conduct wildlife

and plant monitoring and inventories. As part of the program curriculum, Ross has been assigned to a team of federal colleagues working on a research project. His team, the Coalition Builders- Team 27, chose to study Presidential Executive Order 13166 which requires the federal government and its sub-recipients to provide access to services for those individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

The team researched the Executive Order and conducted agency case studies with the Departments of Interior and Labor, US Department of Agriculture and Environmental Protection Agency. The team's findings will be presented during the program's final week of training. In addition, Ross spent a week in New York City working as part of a team tasked with bench-marking high-performing organizations. This research culminated in a paper and presentation to the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC).

Ross graduated from the program in early September in Baltimore, Maryland.

Park Celebrates Cape Verdean Heritage

Cape Verdeans made significant contributions to New Bedford's whaling industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To celebrate their legacy, New Bedford Whaling NHP participated in New Bedford's Cape Verdean Recognition Week events. On June 29th, the Park joined the New Bedford Historical Society, the Cape Verdean Recognition Committee, and Our Lady of Assumption Church to present "A Cape Verdean Family Fair: How To Trace Your Cape Verdean Roots."

More than 60 people attended this genealogy workshop which offered techniques and resources for preserving family histories. The program began with an inspirational powerpoint presentation that included historic images of Cape Verde and New Bedford and Cape Verdeans engaged in the whaling industry. Participants "oooo'h'd" and "ah'd" as they recognized places and individuals from their old New Bedford neighborhood. Paul Cyr, Curator of Special Collections at the New Bedford Free Public Library and Lucille Ramos, Parish Secretary at Our Lady of Assumption Church, talked about ways to utilize whaling and parish records and immigration lists to research Cape Verdean whaler and immigration ancestors. Kathryn Grover, of the New Bedford Historical Society, spoke about conducting oral histories to capture the



Participants at the Genealogy Workshop listen intently as Curator Janice Hodson speaks about preserving family photographs and documents. The workshop was held in June at Our Lady of Assumption Church in New Bedford.

Cape Verdean experience. New Bedford Whaling NHP sponsored Curator Janice Hodson to speak about preserving family photographs and documents. Jim Lopes, a Cape Verdean-American attorney who has compiled a computer database connecting 15,000 Cape Verdean Americans on 6 continents, encouraged participants to go forward and to collect the stories of their Cape Verdean family members, friends, and neighbors to ensure that their history is preserved.

On July 2nd, park staff, their family members, and volunteers from New Bedford Whaling NHP marched with the New Bedford Whaling Museum in the Cape Verdean Recognition Parade. Together they carried photographs of Cape Verdeans engaged in the whaling industry and aboard packet vessels from the Whaling Museum's historic photograph collection. It was a grand celebration and enjoyed by all.



Anne Brengle, (left) Executive Director of the New Bedford Whaling Museum and Superintendent Celeste Bernardo (right) during the Cape Verdean Parade.



NPS staff, volunteers and family members prepare to hit the streets for the annual Cape Verdean parade.

Corson Project Moves to Final Design

This summer has been a busy one for the park staff as planning and design on the Corson Building project is nearing completion. Complex construction projects such as the Corson Building have many hurdles to clear before rehabilitation of the historic structure can begin. Components of the project that have been ongoing this summer include:

- Developing the final design, including the historic preservation methods, interior layouts, design of the new garden and “pedestrian link” that will connect the visitor center and corson buildings,
- Budget review and value engineering,
- Environmental, archeology and historic preservation compliance efforts towards final approvals for the project prior to putting the project out to bid for construction, and
- Preliminary interpretive exhibit planning.

Park staff has made trips to Gateway National Park in New York and Lowell National

Historical Park to get a first hand look at similar facilities, and apply the best design features to the final layout and interior finish details at the Corson Building. The park staff has also used these trips to meet with site program directors to understand what experiences can be shared in the development of the educational programs that might take place in the facility.

Rehabilitating the Corson Building is a key development project identified in the park’s General Management Plan. The building will serve as an education and public program center for the park. The redevelopment plan calls for the creation of a number of interpretive and educational spaces in the facility including a 55 seat theater, a large multi-purpose education space, a seminar room, an archival room, and exhibition galleries. The plan includes the construction of a building link which will connect the park visitor center to the Corson Building.

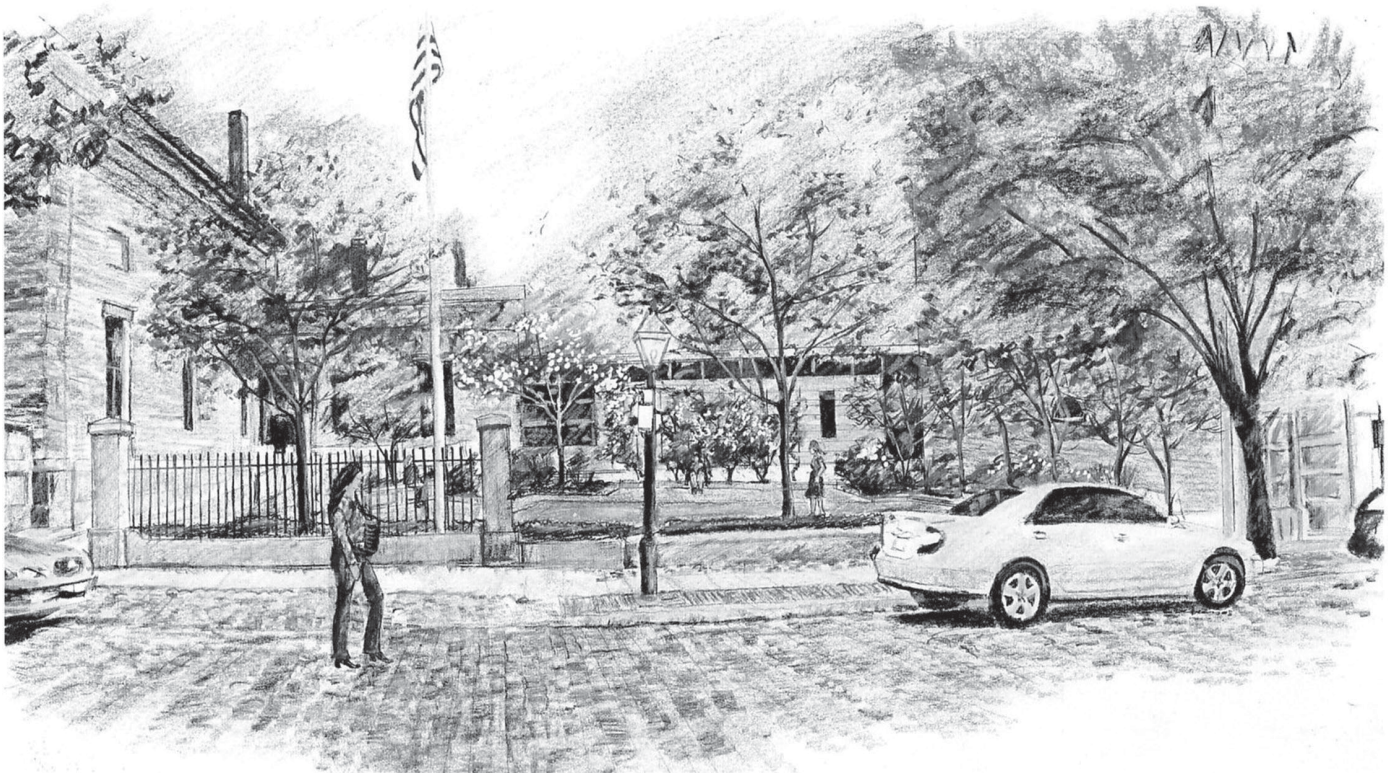
The facility will host the visiting public and provide the space for curriculum and non-

curriculum based educational and interpretive programs, as well as community events.

The final planning, design and compliance documents will be completed this fall. Construction is anticipated to start in 2006 with completion in 2007. Look for updates on the progress of the project in future editions of the Toggle Iron.



Jennifer Gonsalves, Chief of Visitor Services, tests a “cannon” at Gateway National Park with Jeanette Parker, Assist. Director of the National Parks of New York Harbor Education Center, looking on. The “cannon” is part of an education program on coastal defenses.



The garden will be redesigned to better connect the visitor center and the Corson Building. The final design of the garden space will provide for resting in the shade and outdoor performance opportunities in a completely accessible space for visitors and performers alike.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

New Bedford Whaling
National Historical Park

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This newsletter was produced in
partnership with:

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National Park Service
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New Bedford Whaling
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ART • HISTORY • ARCHITECTURE

the second Thursday of each month

All venues and programs are FREE!

Thursday, October 13

“A Storyteller’s Dream”

Thursday, November 10

“Culture 101”

Thursday, December 8

“The Creative Holiday”

5-9 PM

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